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The French White Paper on Defence and National Security: Peacebuilding, NATO, Nuclear Weapons and Space

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> *"Cette stratégie porte une ambition européenne et internationale qui est au coeur de la vocation de la France dans le monde"*[1]

The 17 June unveiling of the French White Paper on Defence and National Security[2] *comes at a period of evolution in French defence and security policy. Reformation of its armed forces, its ambitions to re-integrate into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) military command and its plans to enhance the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), points to a renaissance in France's role in international affairs. Analysing this metamorphosis, this article will navigate the reader through the development of the White Paper to its implications for military reform in France and its goals for the country's strategic orientation over the next fifteen years. Following this, the article will then focus on three issues mentioned in the report that are particularly pertinent for the rest of the European Union ESDP: peacebuilding, NATO, nuclear weapons and space.*

History, Content and Reform

The 2008 French White Paper marks a departure in French foreign policy when compared to its predecessors of 1972 and 1994. The new White Paper is no longer preoccupied with strategies that seek to contain a single definable enemy (the focus of the 1972 Paper) nor is it focused on the primacy of its nuclear deterrent as a means to guarantee security (the aim of the 1994 Paper). Instead, the new White Paper has transformed into a document which is cognisant of contemporary security issues, which recognises that France's national security is inextricably interdependent on external factors, that "*la mondialisation structure désormais l'ensemble des relations internationales*"[3].

Within this new credo, the 'Commission of the White Paper'[4] – established by President Nicolas Sarkozy on 30 July 2007 – set about drafting the White Paper for its 2008 release. The Commission started its work in earnest by consulting with a number of government ministries and ministers, political parties, the armed forces, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), EU

[1] Présidence de la République (2008) *Défense et Sécurité Nationale: Le Livre Blanc*, Paris, p.10. [English Translation]: "This strategy carries a European and international ambition that is at the heart of France's vocation in the world".
[2] Ibid., pp.1-350.
[3] Ibid., p.13. [English Translation]: "globalization now structures international relations".
[4] The *'Commission du Livre Blanc sur la Défense et la Sécurité Nationale'* was formally established in August 2007 and was headed by Jean-Claude Mallet a *Conseiller d'État* (Counsellor of State) – a high ranking civil servant in the government.

partners, academics and security and defence specialists (including Javier Solana, General Henri Bentégeat and Bronislaw Geremek[5]) through forty or so public discussions, webcasts and closed-door consultative sessions.

Finalising the Paper in early 2008, the Commission managed to forge France's security and defence strategy for the next fifteen years by not just covering the threats posed by terrorism, nuclear proliferation, global warming, energy security and France's possible involvement in inter-state wars, but what France must do to negate such threats. As part of this plan, the White Paper innovatively places and links France's security concerns within a wider European context which sees 'Jihadism-inspired terrorism'[6], ballistic missile attacks, cyber attacks and environmental and health crises as the major threats facing the EU for the coming twenty-five years.

In this regard, the White Paper states that the French government will utilise five mechanisms with which to tackle such threats, including:

1) Knowledge and anticipation – this will serve as the back-bone of the White Paper and will include a greater dependence on intelligence, operational knowledge and diplomatic action. A *Conseil National du Renseignement* (National Intelligence Council) headed by the French President and a National Intelligence Coordinator will be established to execute this segment of the strategy;

2) Prevention – this outlines the need to rely on a number of tools (e.g. diplomatic, economic and military) to support the peacekeeping efforts of organisations such as the African Union (AU), to halt criminal trafficking into France and Europe and to develop a crisis early-warning system. Additionally, a French military base will be set-up in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) to monitor the Middle-East and Africa;

3) Deterrence – while proposing a nuclear disarmament action plan, France will still rely on its nuclear deterrent by equipping '*Le Terrible'* – one of France's newest Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBNs) - with an 'M-51.1 sea-launched intercontinental ballistic missile' from 2010 and furnishing its carrier-based 'Mirage 2000 NK3' and 'Rafale' aircrafts with nuclear-armed 'ASMP-A' cruise missiles;

4) Protection – here, the government will protect against cyber-threats by establishing a specific agency to deal with the matter, the *Agence de la Sécurité des Systémes d'Information* (ASSI). It will also see the deployment of a ballistic missile detection system before 2020 and 10,000 soldiers put on stand-by in support of civilian crisis management operations;

5) Intervention – this part of the strategy will see the *Force Opérationelle Terrestre* (Operational Ground Force) shrink to 88,000 troops (30,000 of which will be placed on six-month's short-notice) in order to re-organise it into a more streamlined and rapidly deployable force. The strategy will also make ready 18 naval frigates, 6 Ship Submersible Nuclear Submarines (SSNs), an aircraft-carrier group of 4 and 300 combat aircraft (200

[5] Javier Solana serves as the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy; General Henri Bentégeat serves as Chairman of the EU Military Committee; and Bronislaw Geremek served as a former Member of the European Parliament.
[6] Présidence de la République, op. cit., p.49.

will protect national territory, 70 will be used for external missions and 10 will be placed on permanent alert).

While these five mechanisms are aimed at ensuring France has "equipped, trained and modernized armed forces"[7] some experts, however, see the White Paper as a means by which President Sarkozy can justify making reforms to the armed forces – a move which is seen by some to weaken France's defence capabilities. Such arguments have already seen a number of high-ranking military officials (through the secretive '*Surcouf*' group) denounce the Paper as being "*marqué par un certain amateurisme*"[8], and two prominent socialist members of the *Assemble Nationale* leave the Commission in protest during its consultative phase[9].

Nevertheless, the French government is adamant that any long-term security strategy must go hand-in-hand with military reform. Indeed, this re-structuring has already begun with job cuts of 54,000 (from a total workforce of 320,000) being announced in the administrative sector of the armed forces, the decommissioning of 83 military units and the intended abandonment of 50 military bases and facilities. The government has also stated that the defence budget will remain static until 2012 – the end of Sarkozy's term in office – but then increase by 1% per annum above the rate of inflation after such time, resulting in a saving of EUR 1.9 billion a year to be re-invested back into the armed forces.

Peacemaking, Peacekeeping and Crisis Management

With all the emphasis on military capabilities and reform one would be forgiven for thinking that the White Paper has relegated the importance of peacebuilding to the sidelines, where the emphasis tends to be placed more on 'brains' than 'brawn'. Of course, many a humanitarian or peacekeeping mission would be rendered completely impotent without military equipment and capabilities such as helicopters or reconnaissance; however, it must be realised that where civilian missions are concerned military assets are not always suitable and in some cases can actually undermine the effectiveness of such operations.

To its credit, the White Paper recognises that military might alone is no suitable substitute for skilled civilian personnel and planning. Accordingly, the Paper states that moves will be made to at the national-level, strengthen training programmes such as the Franco-German pilot training school in Provence (France) and to establish an Operation Centre for External Crisis Management in France; while, at the EU-level, creating a European Crisis Management Training Centre, founding a single civil-military Directorate within the EU institutions and facilitating a European 'ERASMUS'[10] type exchange programme for civil-military personnel.

If the French government wants the EU to become a "major player in crisis management"[11], however, it will need to bring more funding and political attention to the training and recruitment

[7] Sarkozy, N. (2008) Speech by the President of the Republic, on Defence and National Security (Excerpts). See: www.ambafrance-uk.org/New-French-White-Paper-on-defence.html.
[8] See: www.lefigaro.fr/debats/2008/06/19/01005-20080619ARTFIG00011-livre-blanc-sur-la-defense-une-esperance-decue.php. [English Translation]: "marked by a certain amount of amateurism".
[9] See: www.ps29.org/article/articleview/2042/1/144/.
[10] The 'European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students' (ERASMUS) was established in 1987 to foster greater multilateral cooperation between European universities, increase social mobility and unlock innovation. The French government is proposing that a similar scheme be created for military and civilian personnel to achieve the same goals.
[11] Présidence de la République, op. cit., p.82.

dimension of EU civilian operations by harnessing more resources at a member state level and ensuring greater use of "European Community instruments and synergies with the third pillar"[12]. The government would also do well to ensure that EU civilian personnel are "adequately qualified to perform their duties"[13] before they leave for missions and not just during them, where time and resources are usually scarce[14].

More can also be done in the specific realms of peacemaking and peacekeeping. It is true that France wants to move forward with the formation of an EU Rapid Reaction Force of 60,000 troops, the creation of a single EU civil-military operations centre and enhancing the capacities of the AU in peacekeeping operations. It also true that France contributes 1,974[15] personnel to peacekeeping missions headed by the United Nations (UN), contributes 1,670[16] troops to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and is actively involved in ESDP operations; for example, it contributes 1,671[17] troops to the EUFOR Chad/RCA mission. Troop levels are, however, not enough.

Indeed, the White Paper seems to gloss over the intricacies of armed intervention especially with regard to troops' interaction with civilian populations while on-the-ground. Accordingly, both French and EU-led interventions should seek to negate the intimidation so often felt by populations – particularly by different genders - during crises where armed forces from both sides of a conflict are seen as a threat. Allaying such concerns would include ensuring greater "communication with the local population"[18] and with local NGOs and by utilising civilian personnel for civilian missions or, if this is not possible, ensuring that military personnel are adequately trained in humanitarian affairs.

France, NATO and the ESDP

NATO also figures prominently in the White Paper stressing France's commitment to a deepened involvement in the security organisation after a forty-two year absence from NATO's military command structure. This absence was based on a decision by President Charles de Gaulle taken in 1966 aimed at defending France's independent use of its nuclear arsenal and halting an American encroachment into its foreign policy. Ever since this decision, France's foreign and security policy has been "characterised by its fidelity to the *grandes lignes* drawn by de Gaulle"[19] ensuring that French armed forces would remain under the sole authority of the French president.

President Sarkozy's decision to break with this Gaullist tradition[20] and reintegrate France back into the military command is, therefore, particularly controversial in France to say the least and

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[12] Council of the European Union (2007) *Civilian Headline Goal 2010,* Brussels, p.2. See: www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Civilian_Headline_Goal_2010.pdf.
[13] Tagarev, T. (2008) 'Civilians in Defence Ministries', *Connections,* vol.7, no.2, p.115.
[14] For an in depth analysis of EU Civilian Crisis Management refer to Gourlay, C., *et al* (2006) 'Civilian Crisis Management: The EU Way'*, Chaillot Paper,* no.90, pp.1-146.
[15] See: www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/2008/jun08_1.pdf.
[16] See: www.nato.int/ISAF/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf.
[17] See: http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Force_Stenght_by_Nations_in_AOO.pdf.
[18] Martinelli, M. (2008) *The Protection of Civilians during Peacekeeping Operations,* European Parliament, Brussels, p.30. See: www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2008_artrel_183_08-06-epstudy-protection-of-civilians.pdf.
[19] Menon, A. (1995) 'From Independence to Cooperation: France, NATO and European Security', *International Affairs*, vol.71, no.1, p.19.
[20] It should be noted that President Jacques Chirac (1995-2007) also attempted to reintegrate France back into NATO's military command fold in 1995 but this failed after the US refused a request by Chirac to appoint a European head of NATO's Southern Command in Naples.

will see the country play an increasing role in the planning stages of NATO-led operations. Such a decision is also aimed at attaining three specific objectives; firstly, it will allow France to re-invent its defence policy from one "resting primarily on nuclear deterrence"[21] to one more involved with military operations; secondly, it will allow France to gain greater control over NATO's military assets (particularly the way they are used); and thirdly, it will allow France to facilitate rapprochement with the United States (US).

Indeed, a rekindling of the Franco-American relationship has already seen France deploy approximately 700 extra troops to its contingent in Afghanistan under NATO's ISAF and an endorsement of US plans to station missile defence systems in Poland and the Czech Republic. However, such actions necessarily raise questions about France's commitment to ESDP. President Sarkozy has himself already made it quite clear that while he thinks NATO is not "sufficiently Europeanised" and that European defence "is not moving forward"[22] he nevertheless believes that "*la complémentarité entre l'Union européenne et l'OTAN doit donc se nourrir de la valeur ajoutée respective des deux entités*"[23].

To Sarkozy's credit, it is telling that he only really showed an interest in re-joining NATO's military command and sending more troops to Afghanistan after US President George W. Bush departed from long-standing US concerns about a European defence force[24]. That said, some caution should at least be given to the French government's rhetoric on the complementarity of NATO and ESDP especially when it talks of 'Europeanising' NATO or building an effective ESDP *for* Europe. In this respect, it will be interesting to see if the importance placed on EU/NATO is a tactic to try and off-load some of France's budgetary and capability burdens on European and American partners.

Ultimately, it will be in it's dealings with these partners which will decide how successful France is at 'Europeanising' NATO, strengthening the ESDP and developing relations between the two entities. With regard to strengthening EU-NATO relations, a major challenge for the French government will be its ability to inject a certain amount of placidity into a situation which has thus far plagued effective cooperation: namely the hostile situation between Turkey (a veto power in NATO) and Cyprus (a member of the EU but not NATO)[25]. President Sarkozy will, therefore, have to carefully temper his much-publicised antipathy towards Turkey's EU membership ambitions if his aim of bridging the EU and NATO is to occur.

If the Turco-Cypriot situation continues to bedevil plans of a coherent EU-NATO partnership then it is likely that the French government will gravitate towards either one of the two entities. If greater political will for a stronger ESDP emerges on the part of EU member states or Turkey proves too much of a problem, then President Sarkozy might be inclined to use the ESDP as a means by which the EU can assert its own foreign policy (and for France to have greater control of its agenda). If, however, Sarkozy does not "see Europeans going the extra mile"[26] on defence or if relations with the US (who see Turkey as a key partner in the fight against terrorism and NATO) start to pale he could place greater stock in NATO.

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[21] Paolini, J. 'The French Case' in Taylor, T. (ed) (1994) *Reshaping European Defence*, London, Chatham House, p.16.
[22] Sarkozy, N., op. cit.
[23] Présidence de la République, op. cit., p.101. [English Translation]: "complementarity between the EU and NATO will have to be nourished if the respective entities are to have any added-value".
[24] See: www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/apr/03/nato.france.
[25] For more information on this issue see: www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=106688.
[26] Lindley-French, J. (2006) 'Why America is Stuck with NATO', *Europe's World,* no.4, p.38.

Nuclear Weapons, Deterrence and De-nuclearisation

Nuclear weapons have long featured as an important part of French foreign policy on the basis that they would maintain France's independence in international affairs and ensure the country's security and defence. This line of thinking – in place since 1960 when France achieved nuclear power status – is offered some continuity in the White Paper. Indeed, the French government has already made plain its intention to build six more Nuclear Powered Attack Submarines (SSNs) and a second nuclear aircraft carrier (although there is a five-year moratorium on this), equip its aircraft with new ASMP-A cruise missiles and update France's SSBNs (a current force of four) with new M51 missiles. Such moves would see France maintain a fully independent nuclear force until at least 2025 with the government investing more into research and development. It will also see France adopt a more US/British strategy of seeking a smaller but sharper nuclear arsenal.

France's maintenance of such capabilities is being complemented by an attempt to reduce its dependency on nuclear arms by decreasing its airborne nuclear weapons to half the level held during the Cold War, dismantling its nuclear testing site in Mururoa (the French Polynesian Islands) and ceasing the manufacture of fissile missile for nuclear weapons. Sarkozy has also announced an 8-point plan for disarmament[27] - calling for *inter alia*, international ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) (signed in 1996), particularly China and the US; an immediate opening of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament to ensure that the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) – which will prohibit weapons-grade uranium and plutonium from being produced - comes into force; the implementation and adherence of all states to the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) against ballistic missile proliferation; an immediate international moratorium on fissile material production; safe and transparent dismantlement of nuclear testing sites; and negotiations for an international treaty banning short and medium range ground-to-ground nuclear missiles.

The necessity of such measures is welcomed. Nuclear weapons are no longer an effective deterrent in foreign policy (e.g. they are not deterring Iran from developing a nuclear programme) and their use misunderstands the contemporary nature of international relations; for example, they are of no use against sub-state actors not confined to the territories of any given nation-states (e.g. terrorists). Additionally, nuclear weapons cannot be entirely protected from cyber-attacks, from hackers who could gain access to launch codes or control systems[28]. Finally, they are also susceptible to human error; for example, in August 2007 the US Air Force 'lost' track of six nuclear-armed cruise missiles for a period of 36 hours[29].

Of course, France should not (and indeed cannot) be expected to completely disarm its nuclear arsenal in isolation. Nuclear disarmament will only occur under a rigorous international agreement[30]. In this sense, France should use its diplomatic influence internationally to: push

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[27] Jean-Marie Collin, "Sarkozy and French nuclear deterrence", BASIC Getting to Zero Papers, No. 2, 15 July 2008. See: www.basicint.org/gtz/gtz02.htm.

[28] See: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120036422673589947.html?mod=opinion_main_commentaries.

[29] See: www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article2702800.ece.

[30] If one applies 'game theory' to the issue of nuclear disarmament – particularly the 'prisoner's dilemma' scenario – three possible scenarios become likely; 1) a 'positive-sum' result in which all states disarm; 2) a 'zero-sum' result in which only a few states disarm and others stay armed; 3) a 'negative-sum' result in which no state disarms. Scenarios two and three will not result in nuclear disarmament because states will retain or rearm to protect themselves from the prevailing threat. Scenario one, the scenario most likely to lead to complete disarmament, is only likely to happen once there is an assurance that no state will retain their nuclear arsenal and in order for this to happen it is not likely that one state will take the first move (as scenario two becomes likely again) – every state will therefore have to disarm at the

negotiations for further disarmament – particularly beginning with Russia and the US; seek stricter adherence to UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004)[31] - which obliges states to establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation nuclear weapons – in countries known to have nuclear arms (especially in former Soviet Union states); reinvigorate and renovate the Non-Proliferation Treaty; follow the monitoring provisions of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol; make a universal commitment on the non-nuclearisation of space; and to ensure that any FMCT contains explicit mention of verification provisions (i.e. ensuring that fissile production facilities are inspected).

Space, Security and Satellites

Space, especially with the emphasis on 'knowledge and anticipation', has also gained greater eminence. Of course, there is nothing new in France's interest in space – a strong focus was placed on intelligence and space by Pierre Joxe[32] for example – and the new White Paper seeks to continue this tradition by re-affirming that it is in France's national interest to bolster observation, ballistic interception, early-warning, navigation and meteorological capabilities in space. This has only been amplified by the increasing sophistication and publicity of space programmes now being fielded by emerging economies such as Russia and China[33].

In response, it is France's intention to give priority to developing French satellite capabilities including a doubling of France's space research budget from its current level of EUR 380 million, the establishment of a French Joint Space Command managed by France's Air Force, the creation of an ASSI (cyber-defence agency) and, by the middle of this decade, the completion of the CERES satellite system[34]. The Paper also reiterates the importance of the Multinational Space-based Imaging System (MUSIS)[35] which will eventually replace France's current optical satellite systems Helios and Pleiades, Germany's SAR-Lupe radar spacecraft and Italy's COSMO-SkyMed radar satellites.

France's space ambitions are not without a European dimension either. Indeed, while the White Paper makes clear that it "opposes the transformation of space into a new battlefield"[36] the French government has nevertheless spoke candidly of the need to alter the European Space Policy from one traditionally concerned with technological and scientific endeavours to one that takes stock of the 'political and security' dimensions of space. Accordingly, France has been pushing for more dialogue on the possible use of the upcoming Galileo satellites[37] and the current Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) satellite system to go beyond their civilian usage to one that can be used for Europe-wide security and intelligence.

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same time. For a more rigorous account of game theory see Schelling, T. (1960), Aumann, R (1974), Snidal, D. (1985), Brams, S. (1994) and Tsebelis, G. (2002).

[31] See: http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/328/43/PDF/N0432843.pdf?OpenElement.

[32] Pierre Joxe served as the French Minister for Defence (1991–1993) under the François Mitterrand Presidency.

[33] France is particularly concerned with China's space programme especially after China's ballistic missile attack (an anti-satellite KE-ASAT missile) on one of its weather satellites (the Feng Yun (FY-1C)) on 11 January 2007.

[34] CERES or 'Clouds and the Earth's Radiant Energy System' is an ongoing NASA project that includes scientific and budgetary input from France's CNES.

[35] MUSIS is an ultra-high resolution optical satellite project that will begin in 2008 and become fully operational in 2015.

[36] Présidence de la République, op.cit., p.143.

[37] Galileo is a EUR 3.4 billion European Space Agency global navigation satellite system project being built to rival the US' Global Positioning System.

In this regard, France has already attained the support of a majority of EU partners with conclusions at a recent meeting ministers dealing in space affairs[38] affirming that "European space policy needs greater political steering in light of major challenges it faces such as the daily life of European citizens, European autonomy, budgetary choices and international relations"[39]. That said, France will face some hostility from Germany who not only harbour ideas of their own autonomous space programme but are reluctant to 'politicise' or 'militarise' space having long held that while "France and the United Kingdom possess substantial military space budgets… Germany has not developed any military satellite systems to date"[40].

Beyond any mention of 'star wars', however, the more clement side of French space policy reassuringly calls for an EU 'code of conduct' on outer-space activites and, the French *Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales* is the first to sign an as yet unratified 'European Code of Conduct for Space Debris Mitigation'[41] initiated by the European Space Agency. However, if such moves are to have any real force they will need the support of the US, China, Russia and India which will inevitably involve an international agreement. In this regard, the French government would do well to use its privileged position at the UN to push for an update of the anachronistic forty year old UN 'Outer Space Treaty'[42].

Conclusions

The French White Paper on Defence and National Security is a document that has precipitated a number of important reforms to France's armed forces and attuned – for better or worse – France's security strategy with the foreign policy intentions and ideals of its President; namely, a France ready to deal with the security challenges thrown-up by globalisation, a France comfortable cooperating with the US on global challenges, a France actively engaged with NATO and the EU and a France whose "military might" is not judged "by its manpower alone"[43].

If any of these objectives are to be attained, however, the French government should be aware of some of the dilemmas posed in this paper. Where peacemaking, peacekeeping and crisis management is concerned, it should be aware of the fact that 'skilled' civilian personnel are only as good as the training they receive and civil-military operations are only as good as the coordination and inter-operability of troops and expert staff. It should be cognisant of the fact that civil crisis management will rely on a proper unison between all European Council and Commission instruments, capabilities and resources and between the three pillars.

Furthermore and where NATO and the ESDP are concerned, the French government should invest in developing lasting cooperation between Turkey and Cyprus by fostering dialogue. It should also ensure that it does not use NATO and the EU for its own political ends by trading one against the other but instead make clear over the next few months left of the French EU

[38] To formal meeting of ministers dealing with space took place on 20-22 July at Kourou (French Guiana) which is the location of the French Space Centre.
[39] See: www.eu2008.fr/PFUE/lang/en/accueil/PFUE-07_2008/PFUE-22.07.2008/resultats_de_la_reunion_des_ministres_en_charge_de_l_espace_a_kourou_guyane.
[40] See: www.bmbf.de/pub/german_space_programme-may_2001.pdf.
[41] See: www.esa.int/esaCP/SEMZPBW797E_index_0.html.
[42] The Treaty's full name is the 'Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies'. It was agreed in 1966 by the UN General Assembly under Resolution 2222 (XXI), is the only Treaty on outer-space and currently serves as the basis for International Space Law covering among other things the non-contamination and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in space.
[43] See: www.economist.com/world/europe/PrinterFriendly.cfm?story_id=11580198.

Presidency how it will bridge NATO and the EU. It might also place plans for broader reforms to the EU defence market on the table so as to lower the costs of defence spending in the EU.

In addition, the French government should make use of its diplomatic strength and international presence to help foster an international environment that allows France and other nuclear powers to reach a goal of zero nuclear weapons. This can only occur by restarting international negotiations, abiding by UNSC Resolution 1540 and the negotiation of the FMCT. France should recognise that nuclear weapons can no longer form part of an effective foreign policy in the future as they are not well suited to dealing with contemporary security threats. It should go further in its own nuclear disarmament and encourage other states to follow its lead in dismantling nuclear test sites and ensuring that its own 'safeguards' at a national-level are monitored and updated.

Finally, on the issue of space the French government should remember that while the politicisation of space does lead to a greater impetus to excel, it also breeds competition among states not necessarily under the sphere of the EU or the US. It should also be aware of the fact that 'politicising' any European Space Policy lessens the chances for the EU or any of its individual member states to admonish states that have already used space for political or military ends. In this regard, the French government should use its international repute and power at the UN to broker a global deal on space which ensures its peaceful employ.

In conclusion, while the 2008 White Paper is - owing to its infancy - still overly laden with intention rather than concrete results, the EU and the rest of the world will be interested in how it will help navigate the French government over the coming years. The more optimistic, might look back in fifteen years time and see a France that managed to get the civil-military balance right, that managed to secure a coherent and effective ESDP working in harmony with NATO and that managed to harness space for peaceful means. The more pessimistic, however, might liken the next fifteen years to that opening move in chess called the 'French Defence', a move marked by solidity and resilience but at the same time making the game cumbersome and open to deadlock.

Daniel Fiott, Programme Associate, ISIS Europe

international security information service, europe
Rue Archimède 50, 1000 Brussels Tel: +32 (0)2 230 7446 Fax: +32 (0)2 230 6113
E-mail: info@isis-europe.org Internet: www.isis-europe.org